

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 03370 01 OF 02 011738Z

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-03 L-01 INR-05 DODE-00

NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 EURE-00 ACDA-05

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O 011640Z MAY 75 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8628

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 3370

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR US

SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - COMMENT ON ROUND II
AND OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE

REF: A. ATHENS 3307; B. STATE 99156

1. THE CLOSING OF ROUND II IN THE US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS THIS WEEK PROVIDES US WITH MORE ACCURATE INSIGHT INTO THE PROBLEMS WE FACE AS WE RESTRUCTURE US-GREEK DEFENSE COOPERATION. IN GENERAL, THE RESULTS OF ROUND II TENDED TO CONFIRM THE IMPRESSIONS WE HAD GAINED IN ROUND I ABOUT GREEK INTENTIONS. THE GREEK GOVT'S MOTIVATION IN SEEKING MODIFICATIONS OF OUR PRESENT RELATIONSHIP IS RELATED MORE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CNSIDERATIONS THAN IT IS TO FOREIGN POLICY. THE GREEK LEADERSHIP, THAT IS, DOES NOT QUESTION WISDOM OF GREECE'S ALIGNMENT WITH THE WEST OR THE NEED FOR A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THAT CONTEXT. GREEK LEADERS ARE HOWEVER SEEKING A LOWER AMERICAN PROFILE IN GREECE AND A GREATER DEGREE OF INFLUENCE OVER AMERICAN ACTIVITIES HERE.

2. TO SAY THIS DOES NOT HOWEVER LESSEN THE DIFFICULTY OF THE PROBLEMS WE FACED IN ROUND II OR OF THOSE WE ARE LIKELY TO FACE IN THE FUTURE. THE CHANGES IN OUR OPERATING RELATION-

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PAGE 02 ATHENS 03370 01 OF 02 011738Z

SHIPS WHICH THE GREEKS SOUGHT AT THE BEGINNING OF ROUND II

WENT BEYOND COSMETICS AND, IN SOME AREAS, BEYOND PLASTIC SURGERY. WHILE THE ATMOSPHERE OF ROUND II WAS NEVER LESS THAN COURTEOUS, IT WAS RARELY MORE THAN THAT AND THE GREEK SIDE MADE CLEAR FROM THE OUTSET THAT WE WERE ENGAGED IN AN ADVERSARY PROCEEDING. FROM OUR STANDPOINT THIS HAD AS MANY ADVANTAGES AS DRAWBACKS SINCE IT ENABLED US TO SPEAK CANDIDLY TO THE GREEKS ABOUT THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO NATO AND THE INJURIOUS EFFECT ON AREA SECURITY PRODUCED BY THEIR CONTINUING RESTRICTIONS ON US MILITARY FACILITIES IN GREECE.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE GREEK SIDE, AND PARTICULARLY ITS MILITARY MEMBERS, REGISTERED THESE POINTS CAREFULLY. CERTAINLY IN THE SUBGROUP MEETINGS ON INDIVIDUAL FACILITIES THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT THE GREEKS RECOGNIZED THE CONTRIBUTION OR MILITARY ACTIVITIES MAKE TO GREEK SECURITY AND THE NEED TO PRUNE THEM CAREFULLY TO AVOID IMPAIRING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. THIS ATTITUDE OF FLEXIBILITY WAS LESS EVIDENT IN THE PLENARY MEETINGS AND AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT, BUT IT WAS NOT ENTIRELY ABSENT EVEN THERE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION THAT WE UNDERTOOK IN DETAILED FORM IN THE SUBGROUPS HELPED PRODUCE GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND HENCE GREATER FLEXIBILITY AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL. IF WE ARE TO GAIN AND TO MAINTAIN ACTIVE AND ENLIGHTENED GREEK SUPPORT FOR OUR REMAINING FACILITIES, THAT SAME EDUCATIONAL PROCESS WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE THROUGH A THIRD ROUND AND, INDEED, BEYOND IT.

4. LOOKING AHEAD, IT IS HARD TO PREDICT AS YET WHAT FORM ROUND III IS LIKELY TO ASSUME OR PRECISELY WHEN IT APT TO OCCUR. OUR PREFERENCE IS TO DEFER A THIRD ROUND UNTIL (A) MOST OF THE REMAINING LOOSE ENDS HAVE BEEN TIED UP, OR (B) INFORMAL EXCHANGES WITH THE GREEKS HAVE DEFINED PROBLEMS WHICH CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED IN A NEW PLENARY MEETING. IN THE FIRST CASE, ROUND III MIGHT NOT OCCUR UNTIL SEPTEMBER AND WOULD SERVE SIMPLY TO SEAL AGREEMENTS ALREADY ARRIVED AT IN SUBSTANCE. IN THE SECOND CASE, A THIRD ROUND MIGHT OCCUR IN LATE JUNE OR JULY AND DEAL ONLY WITH SELECTED ISSUES THAT WERE RIPE FOR PLENARY CONSIDERATION. GREECE'S UPCOMING TALKS WITH NATO WILL ALSO AFFECT THE TIMING OF ROUND III.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ATHENS 03370 01 OF 02 011738Z

5. THERE IS, IN ANY CASE, NO NEED TO CIRCLE OUR CALENDAR AT THIS TIME. THE SECOND ROUND DELINEATED NUMEROUS PROBLEMS ON WHICH FURTHER STAFFING WILL BE REQUIRED IN WASHINGTON, AND FURTHER EXCHANGES WITH THE GREEKS WILL HAVE TO TAKE PLACE IN ATHENS. FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF CATALOG OF PRIORITY ITEMS WHICH WE BELIEVE WASHINGTON AGENCIES SHOULD ADDRESS IN COMING WEEKS.

TATOI - ALTHOUGH DEPT'S REFTEL SPEAKS OF TREATING

THE ATO ISSUE IN ROUND III, WE BELIEVE THAT THE GREEKS WILL PRESS FOR A RESPONSE MUCH SOONER. WHEN BITSIOS AGREED TO DROP ANY REFERENCE TO TATOI FROM THE JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT, HE TOLD STEARNS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER NEVERTHELESS EXPECTED "PROMPT AND FAVORABLE" RESPONSE TO THE GREEK REQUEST THAT WE RELINQUISH THE TATOI PROPERTY. HE HOPED THAT THIS RESPONSE WOULD COME WITHIN A WEEK. CALOGERAS LATER TOLD STEARNS THAT OUR AGREEMENT TO RELINQUISH THE TATOI PROPERTY "IN PRINCIPLE", WITHOUT MENTIONING A DATE, OUGHT TO BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY CARAMANLIS. SINCE THE LEASE ON THE TATOI PROPERTY EXPIRES IN MAY 1977, WE WOULD HOPE THAT SUCH A RESPONSE COULD BE MADE WITHOUT CREATING SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONCERNED. WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE TIMING OF ANY SUBSEQUENT RELOCATION OF THE ATO FACILITY FROM TATOI TO NEA MAKRI IS NEGOTIABLE AND WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT HAVE TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE END OF 1976.

HELLENIKON- ALTHOUGH THE GREEKS HAVE PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A US PRESENCE WILL CONTINUE AT HELLENIKON, IT IS CLEAR

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 03370 02 OF 02 011744Z

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 3370

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THAT DEFINING THE EXTENT OF THAT PRESENCE WILL INVOLVE ADDITIONAL HARD NEGOTIATING. IT IS LIKEWISE CLEAR THAT THE GREEKS STILL ATTACH SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO MAKING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AT HELLENIKON AND WANT TO MOVE AHEAD AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. THE PRESSURES HERE MAY BE SEVERE. WE

WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO FIND THE GREEKS PRESSING US TO MAKE SOME, PREFERABLY CONSPICUOUS, CHANGES BY THE END OF MAY. VISIBLE HELLENIZATION OF THE BASE BY TRANSFERRING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERIMETER SECURITY TO THE GREEK MILITARY AND MOVING US FLAGS, SIGNS AND EMBLEMS TO INTERIOR BUILDINGS MIGHT BE LOGICAL FIRST STEPS. EVEN THESE CHANGES, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT FAVOR MAKING UNTIL THE GREEKS REQUEST THEM. WE SUGGEST THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES, ON A PRIORITY BASIS, PREPARE RESPONSES THAT WE CAN MAKE TO THE GREEK SIDE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AND WHICH COULD BE IMPLEMENTED AT HELLENIKON WITHOUT UNDUE INCONVENIENCE. MORE TIME WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE NEEDED TO ANALYZE THOROUGHLY THE COMPONENTS OF THE BASE AND PREPARE MORE FAR-REACHING MODIFICATIONS OF THE US PRESENCE THERE. WE ESTIMATE THAT THE GREEKS WILL WISH FAIRLY DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH US NO LATER THAN THE FIRST WEEK OF JUNE AND WE SHOULD BE READY AT THAT TIME TO MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WHICH GO BEYOND COSMETIC CHANGES.

HOMEPORTING - HOW MUCH IMPORTANCE THE GREEKS ATTACH TO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ATHENS 03370 02 OF 02 011744Z

EARLY RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE PIER AND OTHER RESIDUAL FACILITIES IS HARD TO SAY. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO BE READY FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT BY EARLY JUNE AND THAT, BEFORE THAT TIME, IT MAY BE USEFUL FOR THE EMBASSY TO TRANSMIT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO THE GREEKS FOR THEIR STUDY AND REACTION. THE WILLINGNESS OF GREEK MEMBERS OF THE HOMEPORTING SUBGROUP TO CONSIDER CONTINUED US USE OF THE PIER AND SHIP REPAIR OFFICE UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE HELLENIC NAVY WAS ENCOURAGING BUT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT REFLECTED AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL. CALOGERAS SPOKE OF "LIQUIDATING" THE FACILITIES CONNECTED WITH HOMEPORTING AND ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT EXPLAIN, OR PERHAPS KNOW WHAT THIS WOULD ENTAIL, HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE OFFICIAL GREEK POSITION WAS TO DENY THE USE OF THE PIER AND RELATED FACILITIES TO THE US NAVY. IN COMING WEEKS WE WILL PROBE THAT POSITION FURTHER. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WHEN BITSIOS AND AVEROFF BECOME AWARE OF THE COSTS OF ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PIER LEASE, THE GREEK POSITION WILL BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS - THE AMOUNT OF URGENCY THAT THE GREEKS ATTACH TO THIS SUBJECT IS AGAIN PROBLEMATIC. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO AMPLIFY OUR PROPOSALS FOR GREEK "PARTICIPATION" BY EARLY JUNE. AT THAT TIME THE EMBASSY COULD TRANSMIT TO THE GREEKS THE CONTENTS OF OUR PACKAGE AND OFFER TO HAVE ONE OR TWO US SPECIALISTS COME OUT FROM WASHINGTON TO ANSWER GREEK QUESTIONS.

SOFA AND THE UMBRELLA AGREEMENT - WE BELIEVE THAT THE GREEK SIDE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE SOFA

SUBGROUP AND WILL NOT PRESS FOR EARLY RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS THAT OBVIOUSLY REQUIRE CAREFUL STAFFING ON BOTH SIDES. WE WILL BE INTERESTED TO HEAR WASHINGTON'S THOUGHTS ON THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE ONGOING DISCUSSIONS. SIMILARLY, THE GREEKS CANNOT LOGICALLY PUSH FOR EARLY DEFINITIVE COMMENT ON THEIR DRAFT UMBRELLA AGREEMENT. WE MADE CLEAR IN THE PLENARY MEETINGS THAT THEIR DRAFT WOULD REQUIRE CAREFUL SCRUTINY IN WASHINGTON AND THAT THEY COULD EXPECT NO REACTION, EVEN A PRELIMINARY ONE, UNTIL DISCUSSIONS WITH THEIR NATO ALLIES HAD BEGUN AND SHOWN ENOUGH PROGRESS TO ANSWER BASIC QUESTIONS WHICH WE AND THE GREEK OTHER ALLIES HAD ABOUT GREECE'S NEW OR REDEFINED ROLE IN NATO.

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 03370 02 OF 02 011744Z

6. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED TO USNATO AND MILITARY ADDRESSEES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENTS, MILITARY BASE AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS03370
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750153-0827
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750587/aaaadcal.tel
Line Count: 245
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 ATHENS 3307, 75 STATE 99156
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <25 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - COMMENT ON ROUND II AND OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE
TAGS: MARR, GR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006